## THE PITTSBURG DISPATCH.

HUSTLING INCOMING MAIL.

in, the work of canceling is at high pres-

A View of the Bustling Interior of the Pittsburg Postoffice.

SPEED A VITAL ELEMENT

HOW WE GET OUR MAIL

In the Composition of the Men Employed by Uncle Sam.

GIVING ODDS TO BASEBALL PITCHERS.

High Standard of Pittsburg's Postoffice-The Best Talent Engaged - Remarkable Speed and Memory of Mail Distributors-Collecting the Mail-Effecing the Stamps -Filling the Ponches-The Small Percentage of Mistakes-Dally Study Necessary to Maintain Efficiency—Deciphering Blind Addresses-An Occasional Consignment to the Dead Letter Office.

IWRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.]



United States mails is now snapped up eagerly by the Postoffice Department. There are three essentials in the transmission of the United

States mail, viz., speed, accuracy and precision. The machinery which secures this result is complicated, the men who are the prime agents in the work are dextrous and skilled by years of practice so that they become almost automatic in their operations, and the different things which may be termed labor and time-saving accessories of the Postoffice Department are all at a high pitch

Especially is this the case in the Pittsburg postoffice, long held up as a model for other cities, and demanding a high meed of praise

Then the letters go to the distributors. These quick-eyed chaps have got them-selves up to such a pitch of accuracy of eye and aim that their work is little short of



The distributors are a class all to them-selves in the department work. They are and have to be extremely sharp-eyed with and have to be extremely sharp-eyed with phenomenal memories as a side qualification. The mail matter is distributed in "cases," these being allotted to various States or groups of States. Pennsylvania and Ohio each have a case to themselves. Other States receiving less mail from here do not demand so much room. There are upward of 1,300 distinct separations of mail made in the Pittsburg office. When the mail is all got away with each pigeonhole is more or less filled. The letters are taken out, tied in a package and ticketed with a is more or less filled. The letters are taken out, tied in a package and ticketed with a slip upon which time of completion, number of clerks and point to be reached are stamped, then these packages are ready to be "routed, i. e., sent in the proper mailpouch over the proper railroad line. Not a moment of time is lost in the whole operation, and the men who can go in and take a case in the distributing department must have the topography of the United States down very fine.

POSTOFFICE PITCHERS.

These packages of letters are taken out to the mailing room. There is a pouch rack in the center of this room which is in the shape of a half semi-circle, the center being occu-pied by a table upon which the mail is dumped. There are 152 canvas sacks hitched to the rack, with their wide-open mouths yearning for mail. Some of the sacks hold both letters and mail, but the majority of them in the largest rack are for papers and packages. The rack slopes upward in order citles, and demanding a high meed of praise to range the sack mouths in ascending order. from those who know what postoffice effici-

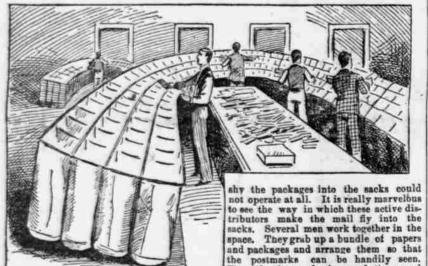
Then the shower begins and the speed with which the packages shoot in all directions is absolutely wonderful.

small a hole at a distance of 15 or 18 feet. But what a complete mastery of the science of

ties of packages, a man must possess to be able to read an address, figure out the proper

Lock Boxes.

IT TAKES STUDY.



One man curves a newspaper into a sack crossing en route a package of wools which is skimming toward a sack diametriency is. Pittsburg's peculiar position geographically is such that a vast amount of mail which has not the slightest connection cally opposite. The sperture in the sack is about 10 inches in diameter, and an average man would have a hard job in tossing a brick with even extreme deliberation into so with the city and its population has to pass through the Pittsburg postoffice and be ticketed for points all over the East, West, North and South. It is usual to refer to Pennsylvania as the Keystone State, but in postoffice parlance Pittsburg is the keystone of the United States mail field. Hence, it has for years been demanded that the Pittsburg office should do an amount of general work | route and with one little turn outside of its purely local incoming and out- of the wrist, yank it into Other postmasters have had a share in the high plane attained, but it may be said that Mr. J. B. Larkin has measured up to the highest demands of the position. The stationing of one of the veterans of the mail service, Superintendent of Mails Stephen Collins, in this city, has been a steady recognition of the importance of the situation, and the great need of the best ob-tainable talent in dealing with the knotty mail problems elucidated in this city.

## THE VITAL ELEMENT.

In every way speed has become a vital element of the service, both for local and other mail service. To trace the course of a letter through the mail boxes, pouches, distributors and carriers is a fascinating pursuit and will undoubtedly interest a public always eager for information of an instructive nature. First and foremost the letter, duly sealed and stamped, is deposited in a box, say in the East End or Southside. Then comes along one of the new little mail carts, a cross between a go-cart, a "one-horse shay" and a sulky. The collector of mail stands on a footboard at the rear and drives. At every box the mail matter is collected and chucked into the mail receptacle, a place somewhat similar in shape and size to the "boot" of an English mail coach, so charmingly described by Charles Dickens in Pickwick Papers. exact sack out of 152 into which it ought to go. The men rarely make mistakes, even when throwing thousands of articles daily. The cart carries 100 pounds of mail matter, The average of errors amount to five or six and when it starts toward the main per month. There are three turns which make use of 14 men. These 14 men throw office no grass is allowed to grow under the feet of the motive an average of 10,000 pieces of mail every day in their lives, the aggregate weight of power-a more or less spry horse. The driver turns into the blind court between which is 30 tons a day, and out of the vast City Hall and the postoffice and dumps the number handled in a month only make an mail into a sort of clothes basket. Two men average of five or six errors. Most of those are the result of sacks being too full, with no seize the basket and weigh the matter and it is then hustled into the canceling tables time to pack the contents compactly. The speed has to be great, and at 7 in the evento have the sickly green stamp defaced and rendered valueless by a smart blow from an ing, when in the throes of making up the inked stamp. A man stands in front of the biggest mail of the day, the air is really huge pile of letters. In one hand is the stamp and the other "skins" over the letters white with flying mail matter. rapidly. Then, when a bunch are gotten into position, the canceling clerk begins to fiv. One of the oldest employes, in speaking of the exactions of this branch of the serhitting the postage stamp and an ink pad of buckskin with alternate strokes, and so fast does the clerk work that the eye is puzzled to follow his motions, while the ear can hardly count or separate the blows. Henry Richline, to follow his motions, while the ear can hardly count or separate the blows. Henry Richline, the fastest man in the office has a record of 200 a minute. There are 50 letters estimated to the pound and the biggest kind of pile is not long in melting away rapidly under such lightning manipulation. Newspapers take much more time to cancel than letters and no one pretands to establishing a record. When men first begin canceling they have a hard time in petting a good brisk "move" on the business as the blows in such rapid succession the the wrist and arm and callous the hand. Between the hours of 8 and 11 P. M. when the bulk of the mail from business houses and individuals comes

and the least hesitation may throw him hopelessly behind in the work of the day. A man has to keep his brain clear or an obscure postoffice may slip his memory at just the time he ought to remember it. The pay ranges from \$600 to \$1,100 per annum, but it is not enough, and the distributors are now organized nationally and will present a solid forefront to the next Congress for an increase in compensation. We make up big sacks of mail tor San Francisco, Texas, and big Western cities which are never touched this side of Chicago. Oh, yes, there is a label of each sack so that the department can tell what clerk put it up, what LIGHTNING DISTRIBUTION. and aim that their work is little short of marvelous. In eight hours' work on an ordinary day of the week past, one distributor, working in front of a mail rack containing 200 pigeonholes—one for every postoffice in Pennsylvania—deciphered the addresses of 10,153 letters, and the bulk of his work was done in three hours. In treatment of matter mailed in Pittsburg for elsewhere, it may be partment can tell what clerk put it up, what time it left the office, and what time it resched its destination. There are from 50 to 100 separate routes made up in this office. The letter mail leaves here, of course, over comparatively few routes, but it has to be divided so that the pouches come in sequence, whichever direction the train runs away from here. It is a mighty complicated

arators take hold and divide the box and carrier mail. The mail carriers then get in their most rapid work in getting the mail arranged by their route. There are 59 carriers in the main office, 13 in East Liberty, 10 on the Southside, and the utmost speed consonant with accuracy is maintained in the proper distribution. The detailed sorting is, of course, slower than the first separation, but there are many men in the office who size up well in their speed record with any office in the United States. The lock box contingent is much smaller than the amount handled by the carriers, and has to be handled with deliberation, for

when the letter is placed in the box the department's responsibility ceases. But the clerks who distribute that class of mail

clerks who distribute that class of mail easily average 2,000 an hour. The addresses are generally legible for box letters. The carriers have the bulk of the fun of deciphering the terribly written addresses of Pittsburg's foreign contingent. There are an average of 300 hopeless cases daily. My clerk and myself manage to decipher the bulk of these, but an average of 20 letters go to the dead letter office every day. We have a smattering of languages which is very effectual in most cases. It is rarely more than an hour before the heaviest Eastern mail is out on the streets and ready for more than an hour before the heaviest East-ern mail is out on the streets and ready for the recipients. In the matter of speed the conditions have to be such in Pittsburg that we have to excel almost any office in the country. I am certain that in transmission of mails either outgoing or incoming, Pitts-burg will compare favorably with any other office in the country." WALES.

A Terrier Furnishes Valuable Assistance to an Amateur Artist. Boston Courier.1

The latest trick in amateur photography is to have a trained dog who at a given signal will run and pull a string by means of which the slide of an instantaneous camera is worked, so that his master may be taken in a group or alone as often as he pleases. It is of course necessary to start the creature at a distance sufficiently great to give the master time to re-arrange his features after giving the word, but this is not a difficult thing to manage, and the young man who devised the trick has been exceedingly popular at the seaside hotel where he has passed the summer, as all the pretty and most of the plain young ladies in the house were anxious to have their pictures taken by the agency of the clever little bull terrier which served as his assistant.

One is prepared for anything nowadays, and it may be that it will not be long before the dogs are seen running about with detective cameras upon their own account. It would not be a bad idea to furnish a watch dog with a flash light detective camera, and lain who invades the domain which he is set to guard. The picture would be an interesting piece of evidence in a trial for burglary, and if it did not carry a conviction it would not iail at least of producing a sensation.

MRS. MACKAY'S PARROT.

The Wonderful Bird Which is Owned by the Bonanza Queen. St. Stephen's Gazette.

London is marvelously empty, but entertainments are still given at Mrs. Mackay's. It is true that the hostess herself is not yet at home; but a grand green parrot has sat at



ASIA'S COAL FIELDS. Mountains of Black Diamonds of the Very Finest Quality.

TONGKING'S TREASURE TROVE.

Remarkable Wealth of France's Possessions in Indo-China.

A LESS OPPRESSIVE POLICY NEEDED.

PITTSBURG.



brave band of French-

men schemed and fought and died. To-day it is known to have been indeed the "baseless fabric of a vision." The Red river has been explored to the Chinese frontier and found to be unsuited to serious navigation for the greater part of its length, to be both shallow and full of rapids. The future of Tongking, therefore, if it has one, must lie in another direction than that which inspired its conquest. But has it a future—this 200,000 square miles of varied country, this 200,000 square miles of varied country, which has cost France 36,000 men and unknown millions of francs, will it some day give back these lives and this treasure a hundredfold, or is it destined to drag on in misgovernment and amid political rancours for a few years, till evacuation closes the shameful chapter? That depends. But for my own part I do not see how anybody who has had opportunities of closely observing Tongking in different parts can doubt the possibility of a future perhaps even beyond that which Garnier dreamed.

To begin with, the most striking super-

To begin with, the most striking super-ficial feature of Tongking is its fertility. Wherever I have seen it, the land has been green with trees and "in verdure clad" or covered with luxuriant crops. The enor-



A Tongkingese Belle,

mous delta of the Red river is or may be a vast rice field, but after the splendid crops of last year nobody doubts this. Before many last year nobody doubts this. Before many years the chief rice supply of the Far East may come from Tongking. And in countless other parts of the country, all the travelers have told us, show moist low-lying land equally suited for rice cultivation. Already experiments have shown that wheat will grow admirably on the dry uplands. Its grain is smaller and however and much bearing them. and browner and much heavier than in Europe, the cost of cultivation is not more, the selling price is at present 50 per cent higher. Oleaginous grain is already grown in considerable quantity by the na-tives, who extract the oil by a curious process of their own. A large concession of land has just been taken up to be planted with sugar cane, and there is no doubt that many other agricultural products need only intelligent introduction. OPENING UP THE COUNTRY.

Again, consider the question of opening up Southern China. Garnier's hopes of the Red river route were baseless, but what the river has failed to do the railway may easily



OCTOBER 20, 1889.

lang grant, etc. If it is carried out, other lines will connect the harbor at Tien-An and with Hanoi, and then strike still further North. Whether this line is built, however, and it is but a trifling thing of 100 miles, the principal objection to it being that it looks too simple. I am convinced that railway communication with Southern China via Tongking is a practicable scheme. Finally, as regards its minerals, the wealth of Tongking is not open to doubt. Two years ago the Government engineer sent out on a special mission by the French Admiralty and Colonial Office to report upon the coalfields of Tongking, gave a list of other mines worked by the natives, 117 in all, and among them 32 gold mines, 13 silver mines, 29 iron mines, 7 copper mines and 6 zinc mines. Here I can begin to speak from my own knowledge. UNLIMITED WEALTH IN SIGHT.

Information may own knowledge.

UNLIMITED WEALTH IN SIGHT.

On the concession of the Societe Fr an caise des Charbonnages du Tonkin, at a place called Campha, I have seen a "boulder stream" of remarkably pure antimony, 3,000 yards long, with an average thickness of 20 feet, and I have stood on a solid block of pure oxide of antimony weighing 16 tons. In the same concession I saw a vein of oxide of cobalt measuring 100 yards by 500 by one yard. And from a little further north I have seen remarkable specimens of copper ore. Infinitely more important, however, than all these, are the coal fields stretching all along the east coast of Tongking. For years the existence of these was well known and many times the commanders of French gunboats, who had been struck by the multitude of outcrops, sent home reports calling attention to them and to the enormous advantages which would accrue to France if they could be successfully worked. At last the company I have already mentioned was formed two years ago to work a concession obtained by M. Bavier-Chauffour, and a large number of its shares were taken up in Hong Kong. At this time the venture was looked upon as



sky and many French and foreign capitalsts fought shy of it.

ists fought shy of it.

The story of the concession, if I had space to narrate it, would read like a chapter of an Oriental "Monte Cristo." To make an indisputable legal tender a ship was chartered to carry 100,000 silver dollars to Tongking, where the foreign population turned out armed to escort the bullock-carts carrying the 25 wooden cases through the streets. Refused there, the dollars were taken on board again to the Court of Annam and the ship narrowly escaped destruction in a ship narrowly escaped destruction in a typhoon. Then they were brought back again to Haiphong, where the French au-thorities finally accepted them. Now the So-ciete has already 1,000 coolies, two engineers and a dozen master-miners at work. Its and a dozen master-miners at work. Its concession extends over scores of square miles, not one-tenth of which has yet even been explored. It consists of three districts, Hongay, Hatou and Campha, the first two being wholly coal. I have been over the whole of the workings twice and into every one of the galleries, and even taken photographs of the miners at work. So I can speak with some confidence. As regards the quantity of the coal, it is practically inexhaustible. There are millions of tons in exhaustible. There are millions of tons in sight and nobody can guess how much lies below. I have been in a score galleries, each of them in a solid seam from 10 to 20 feet thick. At Hatou there are seven seams side by side, aggregating 54 feet of coal. And yet these are merely the preliminary

works of prospecting.

A MOUNTAIN OF COAL. The "Marguerite Mine" at Hongay is a great mountain of coal. As regards quality, the prospects are equally good. The works at present have been made chiefly with the object of discovering the proper place for the deep shafts, and therefore the coal has almost all been surface coal. Yet its analysis has been excellent; it has been tried suc-cessfully on board a French gunboat, the Arquebuse; I myself have traveled for two days in a 50-ton launch with high pressure engines burning it all the time and keeping 30 pounds of steam up; a first contract for the sale of 500 tons has been made; and within the last week coal has been reached at the "Marguerite Mine" giving on an alysis 16 per cent of volatile matter. This was all that was lacking in previous analyses to show a coal slightly superior to Cardiff. Curiously, this is exactly what the French Government engineer, whom I have previously quoted, foretold two years ago. "Our opinion is," his report concludes, "that Tongking possesses an immense wealth of excellent combustible

rivaling Anzin and Cardiff by its extr purity, the absence of iron pyrites, and by a development of heat at least equal to that furnished by these coals." I asked the engineer-in-chief for his formal opinion. "C'est une richesse immense," he said. And he staked his reputation—and he has one to lose—that in four months from now he would furnish in quantity coal equal to

In Europe ten companies would be formed to exploit what has already been discovered on this single concession. When discovered on this single concession. When it is further developed the societe will

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## JOSHUA

A STORY OF THE EXODUS.

By Georg Ebers. Author of "UARDA," "SERAPIS," Etc.

(NOW FIRST PUBLISHED.)



T was midnight. A fire

burned before Joshus's tent and he sat alone beside it, gazing sadly and thoughtfully first into the flames and then out into the distance. The lad Ephraim was lying inside the tent on his uncle's

The leech who accompanied the troops had dressed the youth's wound, and having given him a strengthening draught bade him remain quiet, for he was alarmed at the high fever that had fallen on him.

high fever that had fallen on him.

But Ephraim found not the rest the physician had advised. The image of Kasana now rose before his imagination and added fire to his already overheated blood. Then his thoughts flew to the advice that he should become a warrior like his uncle; and it seemed to him reasonable, because it promised him glory and honor, as he would fain persuade himself, though in truth he desired to follow it because it would bring

desired to follow it because it would bring him nearer to her whom his soul longed for. Then again his pride rebelled when he thought of the insult with which she and her father had branded those to whom he belonged by blood and sympathy. He clinched his fist as he remembered the ruined house of his grandfather, whom he had always considered the worthiest of men. Nor had he forgotten his message. Mirjam had said it over to him several times, and his

thick black hair, or stroked his dark beard, while his eyes lighted up with wrath, it was plain that his soul was seething and that he stood on the threshold of some great resolve.

As yet the lion rests, but when he springs

As yet the lion rests, but when he springs up his enemies must beware.

His soldiers had often compared their bold, strong-willed leader, with his mane-like hair, to the king of beasts; and now he shook his fist, and at the same time the muscles of his brown arm swelled as though they would burst the gold bands that surrounded them, bright flames flashed from his eyes and he was an unspproachable and awesome presence. Out there in the West, whither he turned

his gaze, lay the city of the dead and the ruined strangers' quarters. A few hours before he had led his troops past his father's dismantled house and on through the de-serted town, round which the rayens were

dismantled house and on through the deserted town, round which the ravens were flying.

In silence, for he was still on duty, he had passed it by, and it was not until they had halted that quarters might be found for his troops that he learned the events of the night before from Hornecht, the captain of the archers. He had listened in silence and without moving a muscle or asking one word of further information, and meanwhile the soldiers had pitched the tents; but scarcely had he gone to rest when a lame girl, in spite of the threat of the watch, forced her way in and besought him, in the name of Eliab, one of the oldest slaves of his house, whose granddaughter she was, to go with her to the old man. He had been left behind, as feebleness and ill health prevented his wandering, and directly after the departure of his people he and his wite had been brought of an ass to the little cottage by the harbor, which had been given to the old servant by his generous master.

The girl, too, had been left to look after the infirm couple, and now the heart of the old slave was longing to see once more the first born of his lord, whom as a child he had carried in his arms. He had bidden the girl telf the captain that his father had promised that he (Joshua) would leave the Egyptians and follow his people. The people of Ephraim, yea, the whole race, had heard the news with great rejoicing. The

ever, there was another god, and this was not the God of his fathers, but the god who was conjessed by all those Egyptians who had received initiation, though he remained hidden from the people, who were not able to comprehend him. It was not only the adepts that knew him, but also most of those who were placed in high positions in the service of the State and in the army—whether they were ministers of the divinity or not. Everyone, however, knew what was meant when they spoke simply of "The God," the "Sum of All," the "Creator of Himself," or of the "Great One." Hyrans praised him, epitaphs which everyone could read spoke of this, the only god who revealed himself in the world, who was co-existent and co-equal with the universe, imminent in all creation, not merely as life exists in the body of man, but as being himself the sum total of created things, the universe itself in its personnial growth, decay and resurrection, himself obeying the laws he had laid down. His essence, dwelling in every part of himself, dwelt likewise in man; and look where he might, a mortal could perceive the presence and action of the one. Without him nothing could be conceived of, and thus he was one, like the God of his fathers. Without him nothing could come into being nor any event happen on earth. Thus, like the God of Israel, He was almighty. Joshua had long been wont to think of these gods as essentially the same, and differing only in name. He who worshiped one he deemed was the servant of the other; and so the captain of the host could, with a clear conscience, have stood before his parent and told him that he had been as a sithful to the God of his people as he had been as a warrior in the service of the King.





JOSHUA MEDITATING BEFORE HIS TENT.

she herself had been nearly out of her mind with trouble and anxiety. He would de-serve the richest blessings if he would only go with her.